(b) The programme envisages measures for reorganisation of the affiliated Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACs), strengthening of their resources, rationalisation of loan policies and procedures, training of staff etc. Under the programme, NABARD sanctions ad-hoc credit limits to the weak banks by relaxing the usual norms. Loans and subsidies are also given by NABARD to the concerned CCBs/PACS for strengthening share capitals and meeting additional cost of staff and the training.

Delinking of Press from big Business Houses

2516 SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Press Commission has recommended to delink the Press from the big business houses which constitute a real danger to the freedom of the Press;

(b) if so, what is the proposal of Government to implement this recommendation; and

(c) the reaction of Government to this recommendation of the Press Commission?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) to (c) The Action Taken Report on the Recommendations of the Second Press Commission was laid on the Table of the House on 14th May, 1986. The Commission emphasised the need for insulating the Press from the dominating influence of other business interests in order to enable it to become a vehicle of free thought and expression. The Commission suggested delinking of ownership of Press from business houses and also stressed the need for diffusion of ownership and control of newspapers. While the principles enunciated by the Press Commission are unexceptionable, the problem is a complex one, requiring a thorough national debate before any specific action can be considered.

Crops and Foodgrains damaged by Floods in Assam

2517. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) approximate area of crops in the fields and foodgrains in the stocks damaged by the floods in Assam in the current financial year;

(b) what is the shortfall in production of foodgrains due to the floods; and

(c) what steps are being taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) As per information furnished by Government of Assam, crops over an area of 5.96 lakh ha. were damaged due to floods in 1987. No information has been given by State Government with regard to foodgrains damaged in the State due to floods.

(b) Estimates of agricultural production in the current year are yet to be finalised.

(c) Central assistance, *inter-alia* is extended for agricultural inputs subsidy for the affected small & marginal farmers whose crops are damaged by more than 50 per cent due to floods, etc.